

2018 HARVESTS AT DELAS

Vegetative Cycle

The last sounds of the pruning shears were heard in the 'Jouvet' lieu-dit on the Cornas hillsides on 22 September, closing the harvest.

The harvesting had begun on the 28 August and continued uninterrupted in the scorching September sunshine. The summer temperatures over the final month will undoubtedly have left their mark on the vintage. It was not rare in the Valley for some of the grapes to be picked at temperatures in excess of 28°C!

From bud burst right through until the harvest, the growing cycle was marked by contrasts. Following an early start to the growing cycle, the rain and heat in late spring resulted in a high risk of cryptogamic disease owing to mildew on the leaves and clusters and the subsequent damage unfortunately proved to be irreversible. In certain parts of the Southern Rhône, the Grenaches lost as much as 50% of their potential harvest volume. Our Northern Rhône Valley plots had fortunately been spared from damage, once again thanks to the Mistral wind in June which enabled flowering to take place in excellent conditions.

The arrival of Summer brought with it scorchingly high temperatures, which were interspersed with rainy spells which proved to be our saving grace. Rainfall on the 9 and 13 August (25mm on both occasions) enabled the vine to reach perfect maturity without suffering from the effects of hydric stress.

Harvest

We harvested the first Crozes-Hermitage whites on the 28 August in order to retain as much freshness as possible in the musts.

The Syrahs are currently still lacking in maturity from a phenolic point of view. We had to wait until the 3 September to see the first grapes from Domaine des Grands Chemins (owned by DELAS FRERES in Crozes Hermitage since 2006) arriving in the vat room.

Consistent maturity across all of the northern appellations meant that we had to harvest all of the plots simultaneously, the Crozes-Hermitages as well as the Côte-Rôties, the Saint Josephs and the Hermitages.

Our Viogniers in Condrieu and our Marsannes were, of course, our priority. The different parts of Clos Boucher were pressed between 3-8 September.

La Landonne in Côte Rôtie and Les Bessards in Hermitage (from Domaine des Tourettes from which DELAS FRERES grows all of the grapes for this AOC), were both harvested on the same day this year (13 September) at perfect ripeness and with natural degrees of around 14°.

Acidity levels were low everywhere, although not to the extent of this being a major concern. The high temperatures had the effect of 'burning' the weak acids in the grapes (in particular the malic acids) and the rain in August resulted in very high levels of potassium in the musts. Almost all of the red grapes spent time in a cold storage room to avoid vatting them at excessively high temperatures.

At the time of the first devattings, the quality of the 2018 vintage looks like it will be outstanding.

The texture of the tannic weave is dense and velvety smooth. The sunny character of the wines is reflected in their good sugar content, even prior to the malolactic fermentation. The ageing process will now begin in order to hone the wines and ensure that the oak is well integrated.

Fabrice Rosset (President), Jacques Grange (Head Oenologist and Technical Director) and Claire Darnaud-McKerrow (Assistant to J. Grange), are already sending out their invitations for the release of the 'Domaines Delas Frères' wines which will be unveiled in around two years' time after ageing, racking and bottling, as well as the 'single vineyard selections', which will also soon be available.

